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Letter dated 13 February 2015 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

The United States held the presidency of the Security Council for the month of September 2014. An assessment of the work of the Council has been prepared under my supervision in consultation with the other members of the Council (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Samantha **Power**

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Annex to the letter dated 13 February 2015 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of the United States of America

(September 2014)

Introduction

During the month of September 2014, under the presidency of the United States of America, the Security Council held 16 meetings, issued 12 press statements and adopted 3 resolutions and 2 presidential statements. There was one Heads of State-level Security Council summit on foreign terrorist fighters, chaired by President Barack Obama of the United States, which included the adoption of resolution 2178 (2014), which required countries to take steps to address that threat. There was a ministerial-level open debate on Iraq, during which the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2014/7). The Council also held an emergency meeting on Ebola on 18 September and adopted resolution 2177 (2014), which declared the outbreak a threat to international peace and security and called on all States to take swift action to contain the spread of Ebola. The Council held two meetings with troop-contributing countries for the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

Africa

Liberia

On 9 September, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia and Head of UNMIL, Karin Landgren, told the Security Council that the Ebola outbreak was the "gravest" threat facing Liberia since its civil war. Ms. Landgren observed that Ebola's spread had "outpaced" the response capacity of the Liberian Government. She reported that UNMIL had turned its focus to supporting the Liberian-led Ebola response efforts, noting that the Mission was assisting in security, logistics, communications and coordination efforts. She said UNMIL had reactivated its air shuttle to Accra and opened up its medical facilities for routine care to international health-care and humanitarian workers. The Defense Minister of Liberia, Brownie Samukai, urged the international community to provide financial and logistical support to buttress Liberian response efforts and expressed support for a three-month technical rollover of the UNMIL mandate. In closed consultations, Ms. Landgren warned that the Ebola crisis was "exacerbating" underlying political tensions, stressing that those tensions might deepen as the Ebola outbreak spread. On 15 September, upon recommendation from the Secretary-General (see S/2014/644), the Council delayed consideration of his previous proposals to adjust the mandate, contained in his report of 15 August 2014 (S/2014/598). Instead, owing to the exceptional circumstances created by the Ebola crisis, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2176 (2014), which extended the existing mandate of UNMIL to 31 December 2014.

Libya

On 15 September, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Bernardino León, told the Security Council that Libya was moving closer to the "brink of protracted conflict and civil strife" amid growing political polarization, continued fighting, a deteriorating humanitarian situation and deep disillusionment by many Libyans with their country's democratic transition. While he stressed deep political differences and a profound "trust deficit", Mr. León expressed confidence at the willingness of all parties to engage constructively with UNSMIL towards a peaceful solution and emphasized the importance of taking advantage of the current "small windows of opportunity" to resolve the crisis. In his statement to the Council, the Permanent Representative of Libya, Ibrahim Dabbashi, expressed hope that the role of UNSMIL would change to keep up with the "new priorities" within the framework of its current mandate, prioritizing more effective support for the House of Representatives and its appointed Government, which he said were "the legitimate authorities pursuant to the will of the Libyan people", and ending the violence and disarming militias. Some Council members stressed the need for more active roles for countries and organizations in the region. Council members expressed concern about the ongoing violence and the continuing flow of arms into the country, with some Council members recommending that States should use their influence with those sending arms shipments to armed groups. Some Council members expressed concern at ongoing human rights violations, including those affecting foreigners and migrants. The Council agreed on elements to include in its press statement, which included support for Mr. León's efforts to foster an inclusive political dialogue; a call to end the violence; support for the legitimate constitutional institutions of Libya; emphasis that the Council would take action against those threatening peace and stability, pursuant to its resolution 2174 (2014); condemnation of attempts to illicitly export oil, pursuant to its resolution 2146 (2014); and concern about the humanitarian situation.

The Deputy Permanent Representative of Rwanda, Olivier Nduhungirehe, on behalf of the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, then briefed the Security Council on the work of the Committee from 10 June to 15 September 2014. He recalled that the Council, in its resolution 2174 (2014), had reinforced the arms embargo and expanded the criteria for the designation of individuals and entities subject to the travel ban and asset freeze. Subsequently, the Committee met on 2 and 12 September to discuss supporting the implementation of resolution 2174 (2014), including by issuing a press statement, updating two Implementation Assistance Notices and dispatching notes verbale to all Member States on matters related to the arms embargo. Mr. Nduhungirehe noted the 4 September interim report of the Panel of Experts to the Council, highlighting its principal conclusions regarding "the rapid decline of the security situation in Libya, coupled with weak oversight over procurement of military materiel and virtually no control over sea and airports by the Libyan Government, as a strong indicator that large quantities of military materiel have reached militias" (see S/PV.7264). He cited evidence in the report of two specific incidents where military materiel previously exempted by the Committee had been diverted. He noted that the Committee had agreed to follow up on 15 recommendations and to invite Libya and its neighbours to attend a future Committee meeting to discuss challenges to implementing sanctions.

Peace and security in Africa: Ebola

On 18 September, the Security Council held an open debate on the Ebola outbreak, in connection with the agenda item "Peace and security in Africa". Resolution 2177 (2014), with 134 co-sponsors, was adopted unanimously. The Secretary-General delivered a statement and the Council received briefings by the United Nations System Senior Coordinator for Ebola Virus Disease, David Nabarro; the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Margaret Chan; and a Médecins Sans Frontières physicians' assistant, Jackson K. P. Niamah, via videoconference from Liberia. An additional 45 speakers from Member States offered statements to the Council, including the foreign ministers of the three most-affected countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The Deputy Foreign Minister of Cuba and senior representatives from the African Union and European Union also offered interventions.

The Secretary-General expressed his appreciation for those working on the front lines against the virus, while stressing that "the unprecedented situation requires unprecedented steps to save lives and safeguard peace and security". The Secretary-General announced his decision to establish a United Nations emergency health mission, the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER), aimed at stopping the outbreak, treating the infected, ensuring essential services, preserving stability and preventing further outbreaks. Mr. Nabarro said that the response was falling behind because the disease was advancing at an "exponential" pace, with a doubling of cases every three weeks. He stressed that the response must be on a scale 20 times greater than current levels. Ms. Chan underlined that the present outbreak was not just a public health crisis, but an economic, political and national security crisis, and called attention to the Ebola Response Road Map of WHO, where the most urgent needs had been set out along with 12 critical actions to be carried out by UNMEER. Mr. Niamah, a team leader in a Médecins Sans Frontières treatment centre in Monrovia, spoke of the deaths of fellow health workers and civilians and issued an impassioned plea for additional treatment centres, health workers and supplies.

Representatives of Member States reinforced the urgency and severity of the outbreak, offered support for UNMEER and a United Nations leadership role in combating Ebola, committed specific funds and supplies to the effort and presented strong international solidarity with those nations affected. Representatives of Luxembourg and Brazil reinforced the essential role of the Peacebuilding Commission in preventing the affected countries from slipping backwards into conflict, the Representative of Argentina underscored the underlying inequality that has resulted in the absence of strong health-care infrastructure and representatives of a number of countries urged that transit and trade routes be kept open to facilitate delivery of aid and assistance.

Asia and the Middle East

Middle East (Syrian Arab Republic)

On 4 September, the Special Coordinator for the Joint Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations for the Elimination of the Chemical Weapons Programme of the Syrian Arab Republic, Sigrid Kaag, informed the Security Council that 100 per cent of the chemical

weapons materials aboard the vessel *Cape Ray* had been destroyed, marking the destruction of 96 per cent of the country's total declared chemical weapons materials. Ms. Kaag described the ongoing discussions with the Syrian authorities over the initial declaration and identifying discrepancies as "the heart of the matter", reporting that a negotiating team was set to arrive in Damascus on 19 September. Ms. Kaag said that while the Joint Mission would conclude its work on 30 September, she would remain as a senior adviser and "the face" of the continuing "good offices" mission of the Secretary-General to follow up on resolution 2118 (2013). Some countries emphasized the need for the Syrian Arab Republic not to feel "let off the hook" by the conclusion of the Joint Mission's work. Several Council members asked for an update on activities of the fact-finding mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons working to establish the facts surrounding the allegations of the use of toxic chemicals, reportedly chlorine, for hostile purposes in the Syrian Arab Republic. Several members said that the report of the fact-finding mission provided evidence that chlorine bombs likely were dropped from helicopters and that, because only the Syrian Government possessed that capability in the country, the report therefore pointed to the Government's use of chlorine as a weapon. One member suggested that the witnesses' accounts could not be sufficient for such accusations. Several Council members also called for those responsible for chemical weapons attacks to be held accountable. On destruction activities, Ms. Kaag said that 4 of the 12 production facilities set to be razed were located in "conflict affected areas".

On 30 September, Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos briefed the Security Council on humanitarian issues in the Syrian Arab Republic. Ms. Amos reported that while the United Nations continued to scale up its cross-line and cross-border assistance, violence continued and all parties continued to target civilians indiscriminately. Ms. Amos reported that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other armed groups had delayed and blocked humanitarian assistance and stressed that, without additional funding, the World Food Programme would be unable to provide food to Syrians after the next two months.

In closed consultations following the briefing, Ms. Amos described the Government's control over assistance delivery as unpredictable, leading to challenges related to access. Ms. Amos reported that the security situation remained a key factor keeping the United Nations from meeting targets for assistance. Security Council members emphasized the need to alleviate the humanitarian situation, mentioning in that regard the imperative of a Syrian-led political solution. Some members condemned ISIL, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and other parties to the Syrian conflict for non-compliance with United Nations resolutions, with several expressing concern over government manipulation of humanitarian aid. Many Council members urged the United Nations to further increase the cross-border shipments authorized by Security Council resolution 2165 (2014).

Iran

On 15 September, the Permanent Representative of Australia and Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006), Gary Quinlan, briefed the Council on the Committee's recent activities, including its ongoing consideration of the March 2014 seizure of arms aboard the vessel *Klos C*

by Israel and its response to inquiries about aspects of sanctions implementation. Council members broadly expressed their hopes for the ongoing five plus one group dialogue with the Islamic Republic of Iran, including meetings to be held in New York later in September, and reiterated that a long-term and proper solution of the Iranian nuclear issue should be sought through diplomatic and peaceful means. A number of Council members underscored that United Nations sanctions remained fully in effect during this period of negotiations. Most members also encouraged the Islamic Republic of Iran to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency to resolve outstanding concerns about its nuclear programme, and some members encouraged the country to respond to a recent Committee letter asking for more information on the *Klos C* incident. One delegation pointed out that all the experts' activities, including their data and analysis, were confidential and that they could not automatically be included in documents of the Committee that are meant for broad distribution, and the same delegation also asserted that the conclusions reached by the independent experts could not serve as guidelines for action.

Middle East

In his briefing to the Security Council on 16 September, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry, reported that the Egyptian-brokered ceasefire in Gaza had largely held but remained fragile. Mr. Serry cautioned against a United Nations role in monitoring a ceasefire, but announced that his Office had brokered a trilateral agreement between Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the United Nations on a mechanism to facilitate significant reconstruction efforts while addressing the security concerns of Israel. He warned that, without a change in the fundamental dynamics, the situation in Gaza would remain unstable. In consultations, some Council members called for Council action on Gaza, specifically through a resolution.

Afghanistan

On 18 September, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ján Kubiš briefed the Security Council during a debate on the situation in Afghanistan. Mr. Kubiš urged an agreement between the two presidential candidates of Afghanistan on a government of national unity. He also highlighted the importance of continued international security and development assistance to Afghanistan. Council members commended the United Nations role in facilitating the country's political dialogue and election audit process, and joined Mr. Kubiš in calling for a government of national unity. Members also stressed the importance of the country's reconciliation, counter-narcotics, and regional cooperation efforts. Council members subsequently welcomed the conclusion of the presidential election and the agreement signed to establish a government of national unity.

Iraq

On 19 September, United States Secretary of State John F. Kerry chaired a Security Council ministerial session on Iraq, which included the adoption of a Presidential Statement (S/PRST/2014/20). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Nickolay Mladenov, welcomed the Council's continued efforts and support to the people and Government of Iraq, while noting the "immense challenges" the United Nations still faced in addressing the humanitarian crisis. The

Foreign Minister of Iraq, Ibrahim Al-Jaafari, reiterated his Government's commitment to eliminating terrorism in his country, and, while acknowledging that the fight was primarily the responsibility of Iraq, he welcomed assistance from international partners, referencing a letter of 25 June to the Council requesting assistance from the international community (S/2014/440). Forty speakers participated in the debate, expressing general concern over the current situation in Iraq, which represented a grave threat to the whole region. The need for coordinated efforts at all levels on the basis of international law was underscored. All speakers praised the timely formation of the new Government and stressed the importance of inclusiveness. The interventions highlighted the types and amount of humanitarian, economic and military assistance countries had provided so far, and some countries also announced additional assistance at the session.

United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

On 3 September, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous told the Security Council that a Department of Safety and Security team had arrived in the Golan Heights to negotiate the release of the 45 detained Fijian peacekeepers from the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). He stressed that the United Nations was not negotiating with the abductors but rather with intermediaries. Mr. Ladsous reported that the captors reportedly said those detained were "well treated", which was an assertion the United Nations could not confirm. Mr. Ladsous defended the UNDOF Force Commander's actions as "professional and solid" in response to the evolving situation on the ground. He said the safety and security of UNDOF was reviewed constantly. In a question-and-answer exchange between Council members and Mr. Ladsous, several Council members stated concern regarding the fact that the United Nations was negotiating for the release of the peacekeepers, as it might attract others to take United Nations hostages, while others asked Mr. Ladsous if UNDOF needed heavier weaponry or further Council action. Mr. Ladsous thanked the Council for issuing several statements concerning UNDOF in recent days. Council members also agreed to release a press statement on the situation.

On 17 September, Assistant Secretary-General Edmond Mulet told Security Council members that the situation in the UNDOF area of operation was volatile and would remain so for the foreseeable future. He said the situation had changed drastically recently, noting intensified fighting between the Syrian Arab Armed Forces and armed groups, particularly in the central and northern part of the area of separation. He stressed that recent developments made it difficult for UNDOF to maintain its longstanding activities and posture, adding that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was planning to review how UNDOF could best implement its mandate under the current security situation. Mr. Mulet said operations by the al-Nusra Front and other armed opposition groups had surprised the Syrian Arab Armed Forces in both strength and mobility, and noted that the Syrian Arab Armed Forces had withdrawn from their positions throughout most of the area of limitation on the Bravo side and moved farther east. He reported that advances by radical groups affiliated with the al-Nusra Front had precipitated a precautionary evacuation of UNDOF peacekeepers from Camp Faouar and several nearby observation posts to the Alpha side. Mr. Mulet considered the replacement of the departing Filipino contingent "not an urgent matter", adding that there was no need for additional force protection because most personnel were operating from the

Alpha side. Council members welcomed the safe release of the 45 Fijian peacekeepers, stressed the continued importance of the mission and underscored the importance of strong Council support.

Europe and Latin America

Haiti

On 11 September, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, Sandra Honoré, briefed the Security Council during a debate on the situation in Haiti. Ms. Honoré called for elections based on the constitution and a sound legal framework, hailed security gains and advocated forcefully for the proposal of the Secretary-General to reduce the Mission's military component to two battalions plus enablers by June 2015. All members called for urgent agreement on elections and welcomed the country's progress. Council members expressed a range of views on the force reductions proposed by the Secretary-General.

Letter dated 13 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/264)

On 19 September, during an open briefing on recent developments in the investigation into the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman summarized the preliminary report published by the independent Dutch Safety Board (S/2014/657). Mr. Feltman said that the report, submitted on 9 September, contained the first factual findings based on the cockpit voice recorder, the flight data recorder, air traffic control data and radar and satellite images. The report noted that the aircraft was in "airworthy condition", and had not sent out distress messages that had been detected. It asserted that flight MH17 broke apart over Ukraine due to penetration by a large number of "high-energy objects from outside the aircraft". While the ceasefire between Government and rebel forces in south-eastern Ukraine was holding, he added, the conditions were still not conducive for the investigators' full and unfettered access to the crash site. Mr. Feltman reiterated the call of the Secretary-General on all those with influence to exert it immediately, so as to create a propitious security environment for investigators before the arrival of winter. Mr. Feltman also updated the Security Council on activities of the International Civil Aviation Organization, which had convened a special task force on risks to civil aviation arising from conflict zones. Also briefing the Council, the Foreign Minister of the Netherlands, Frans Timmermans, underlined the independence of the Dutch Safety Board and noted the final report was expected in the summer of 2015. Mr. Timmermans stressed that his country would not rest until the facts were known and justice was served. He also thanked the rescue workers, people from Ukraine and the joint team of Malaysian, Australian and Dutch forensic experts and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe for their contributions. Most members of the Council welcomed the Dutch Safety Board's preliminary report and called for further investigation and for full and unfettered access to the crash site, respect for the ceasefire agreement and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The Foreign Minister of Australia, Julie Bishop, said the Dutch Safety Board's findings were based on objective analysis of the available evidence and

were a step forward in achieving the full, thorough and independent investigation demanded by resolution 2166 (2014). A representative of one Member State called for United Nations assistance and involvement in the investigation, which it said was in line with resolution 2166 (2014). Representatives of several Member States that lost nationals aboard flight MH17 also spoke during the session.

Thematic issues and other matters

Terrorism

On 24 September, President Barack Obama of the United States chaired a Heads of State-level open debate to address the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters. The Secretary-General briefed the Security Council on the evolving nature of the terrorist threat, highlighting the fact that thousands of terrorist fighters have joined ISIL and the al-Nusra Front and underscoring the value of a multilateral, multifaceted strategy to defeat terrorism and avoid further radicalization. The Council adopted resolution 2178 (2014), which requires States to take steps to prevent travel by foreign terrorist fighters, enhance international cooperation and combat the violent extremism that leads to terrorism. Council members uniformly expressed great concern about the recent surge in foreign terrorist fighters, emphasizing the role that such fighters play in exacerbating conflicts and threatening States of origin and transit. Most Council members also underscored the need for enhanced efforts to counter the violent extremism that fuels radicalization to violence. Some 40 non-Council members echoed those themes, with all expressing broad condemnation of the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon and urging concerted effort to combat it.

Children and armed conflict

On 8 September, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Leila Zerrougui, briefed the Security Council during an open debate. She called on the Council to fight against impunity and ensure that all perpetrators of violations and abuses against children faced prosecution by including them in sanctions regimes, doubling efforts to enhance national capacities in the judicial sector and strengthening the framework of international justice, including the referral of perpetrators to the International Criminal Court.

Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous asked the Security Council for continued support to ensure that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations would be able to deploy child-protection advisers to all priority areas.

The Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund, Yoka Brandt, while recognizing continuing efforts to keep children safe in armed conflicts, underlined that challenges and setbacks have taken a tragic toll on children. The Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Forest Whitaker, recounted the dire situation for children in South Sudan and urged stronger efforts for their reintegration. A former Congolese refugee, Sandra Uwiringiyimana, recounted her story of surviving the Gatumba massacre in Burundi in 2004 and called on the international community to hold perpetrators accountable.

Security Council members voiced concern about how conflicts affected children, including grave violations of international law against children committed by extremists and other non-state armed groups, the military use of schools and sexual and gender-based violence. Most Council members expressed support for the "Children, Not Soldiers" campaign. In addition to Council members, representatives of 44 non-Council Member States and other delegations participated in the open debate.